

'War Game' protests—and the BBC's reply

The BBC's decision not to broadcast the television film, "The War Game," has met with a great deal of protest. The following is the text of a letter which the BBC has sent to those who protested about the ban. The letter was duplicated, apart from a few words typed in in the opening paragraph.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of November 26 about the BBC's decision not to broadcast the television film *The War Game*. I have been asked to reply.

Danger point

This week, and for the rest of January, Peace News will have only ten pages. I am sorry to open the New Year in so unpleasant a way; but it has been forced upon us by the relentless and continued drain on our resources over the last year. We want to return to twelve pages; but we can only do so if we can find more money for the paper. This means an effort on our part, to increase sales and to get more revenue from advertising and special fund-raising efforts. But it also means that we have to reach and pass the target for this year's annual appeal. This appeal will be issued this month, and it will set out in more detail what are the difficulties facing Peace News. Will you do as much as you can to help - not just to give us money, but to give more than you were intending to, and to make sure that everyone you know who cares about the paper gives as well? This month will be the crucial one, which will decide whether Peace News can develop and improve, or whether we will have to make further cuts which will make the paper less interesting and less useful to you. It really is very serious. Please help.

ROD PRINCE

The BBC's Television Service undertook to make this film because the issues raised by the possibility of nuclear warfare against this country were recognised to be of such public significance and concern that they ought to be made known to the public in one of our programmes, if we could find ways of overcoming the obvious difficulties of presentation. There was an element of experiment in this project, as in much broadcast production. Such programme experiments sometimes fail and have to be put on one side at some stage in production, even though money has been spent on them. They are, nevertheless, a necessary part of the development of broadcasting, and such failures as may occur are the price we must expect to pay if new forms and subjects are to be brought within the compass of television.

In preparing *The War Game*, we knew throughout that there would be questions about whether the completed film would be suitable for broadcast presentation. The project was, therefore, carefully reviewed at every stage of production. At each stage it was clear that the final question of broadcast showing could not be resolved without proceeding to the next stage. Thus we proceeded from idea to synopsis, from synopsis to script, from script to filming, and from filming to final editing. At none of these stages could we have said with certainty that we should proceed no farther. Equally, we could not say whether the final result would be suitable for broadcasting. It was only when the film was in its completed state that a proper judgment could be made.

When the film was completed and

screened for senior programme staff of the BBC most of those who saw it were very deeply affected, and believed that it had the power to produce unpredictable emotions and moral difficulties whose resolution called for balance and judgment of the highest order. The horror of the film was, in their view, of an entirely different quality to that which is contained in the recognisably fictional presentations of some television films.

It was also different in its impact from the objective presentation of past horrors - such as scenes which might be shown in documentaries on Culloden, the Hiroshima bombing or the extermination of the Warsaw Ghetto. Such scenes, because of their fictional character, or because of their historic setting, do not have the personal application that would have come from the broadcast showing of *The War Game*, which conveyed the sense that what it was showing could happen to the people who might be watching it. In the opinion of those who have seen it, this horrifying effect is inherent in the pictorial presentation, rather than in the script itself. It was quite different in its degree of horror from anything which those who saw the film had previously experienced.

The BBC has, therefore, reluctantly decided that, because of its nature, this film cannot be broadcast. No matter how late at night it was screened, and whatever warnings might be given before the showing, we could not be certain that the audience would not include some for whom its horrors would have reached the point of danger. In making this decision, the BBC acted on its own judgment. There was no outside pressure. In particular, we received no advice from gov-

ernment departments or officials about whether or not the film should be shown on the air. In making its decision, the BBC had to set aside its own belief that the probable effects of nuclear warfare should be made known to the public, if at all possible, through the medium of television.

The BBC recognises that there is a public interest in this subject and that many people may wish to see the film, but its contractual rights are limited and it will not be possible for the BBC to arrange for showings in theatres to all those who would wish to be invited. We shall ourselves arrange to show the film to those who took part in it or helped in its making, and to those who are recognised by the BBC as having a legitimate professional interest in the techniques of its production. Those who may have special reason for wishing to see it because of their official responsibilities for aspects of national defence (including Civil Defence) can be invited to any further showings of the film only on the basis of nomination by the government department under whose jurisdiction they serve. The BBC is sorry that applications from private individuals to see such showings cannot be considered.

We appreciate your concern and your interest in this very important subject. We recognised when we took our decision that some might believe it to have been mistaken or improperly influenced. We accept the possibility that others may differ from us in their opinion about the broadcasting of the film. We must follow our own judgment, and we have no doubt that it was rightly applied in this instance. We can do no more than repeat that the decision was our own, and that we are sorry that we have had to withhold from the television audience a programme of great merit.

Yours faithfully,
O. G. Taylor
(for the Secretary)

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Putting aside the question as to how the BBC can so sharply distinguish between the content of *The War Game* and the film itself, there is another basic contradiction in the letter. The BBC made *The War Game* because it was thought the public had a right to know about the effects of nuclear war. Now, although the film is supposed to be accurate and well made, we are being told not that we must not see this film but that we cannot.

The reasons given are flimsy. The vague excuse of limited "contractual rights" is not adequately explained; the strict limits put on audiences for private view-



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The book's 350 pages contain the life of France's most militant anti-militarist. It covers more than half of our century, and the reader meets practically all the social and political battles fought in France during this period.

Lecoin is now 78. He was born in poverty in a small provincial town, Saint-Amant-Montrond. During his youth he became an anarchist and joined the often violent battles for trade union rights. He undertook the risks of the struggle against the state, the ruling class, police and judges. He went into hunger strikes to correct ugly cases of injustice. He was in jail as an objector to military service during both world wars. He fought openly for Sacco and Vanzetti, organising a nationwide movement for their lives; all his life, he has been a man of action and

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Lecoin has been in the news in the last three years because of his struggle for legal recognition in France of conscientious objection. The last hundred pages of his book are devoted to this fight, and his account, together with photographs and documents, gives an extremely important picture of what one man can achieve even against a united front of almost all the officials, military and civilian, of a state like France. Nobody will read the story of his hunger strike in June 1962 without being deeply touched. At that time I followed his actions from day to day, and I am sure that without Lecoin, his daughter, and Pierre Martin and some others joining in this hunger strike, no French government would ever have given in.

In countries like England and Holland, hunger strikes are generally not needed to get legal provision for conscientious

objectors, even if their governments are extremely conservative. But in France it proved necessary, and Louis Lecoin was the man who created the miracle.

But here I have to add that one other man must also be named in this context: de Gaulle. Whatever can be said of de Gaulle, he did in regard to conscientious objectors what no government before him ever did: he limited the punishments from indefinite to five years, and later to three years, and he gave them their first statute. The anarchist and the general in this were collaborators, to the honour of both.

HEIN VAN WIJK

Hein Van Wijk is a lawyer who, as legal adviser to the Dutch Board for Conscientious Objectors, has defended COs in the courts, and contributed to improvements in the Dutch CO law.



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The reasons given are flimsy. The vague excuse of limited "contractual rights" is not adequately explained; the strict limits put on audiences for private viewing seem highly suspect. It is difficult to believe that the BBC, with all its resources, cannot show *The War Game* to a wider public than it plans to cater for.

The general public still has a right to see *The War Game*, and that right far outweighs any "contractual rights" difficulties the BBC might put in its way. If it is not possible to put the film on in theatres, then it is surely time for the BBC to reconsider broadcasting the film on television. *The War Game* has now had enough publicity to warn off anyone likely to be harmfully affected by its horror.

Otherwise, the BBC must do everything else in its power to allow those members of the general public who want to see the film to do so. If this is not done, then the letter's claim that the ban on *The War Game* was not made because of "outside pressure" will be more than ever open to doubt.

JOHN BALL'S COLUMN

BETTY PILKINGTON'S UN COMMENTARY

Troubles at the twentieth

Maybe the UN General Assembly that adjourned just before Christmas deserves to be singled out in the record-books not just because it was the twentieth but because it "happened" at all. Nobody has forgotten the paralysis that had plagued the Assembly for months. In fact, this last session did more than survive, it functioned along fully traditional lines, debating at length, voting when necessary, and adopting an impressive stack of resolutions.

But for many delegates, going through this routine was a bit like applying a beautiful bandage to a little cut on the finger when what the patient really needs is a major operation. The war in Vietnam and the continued absence of China are two realities - not necessarily unrelated - on which the United Nations is obliged to admit its helplessness; and yet these same two factors exerted an almost tangible influence on virtually every political consideration of any importance in the work of the Assembly from start to finish.

The unanimity with which delegates accepted the idea of a world disarmament conference designed primarily to include Peking - after an embittered 47-to-47 split over Chinese representation - could in one sense be read as a kind of "penance" vote, the registering of a suddenly greater awareness of the need to have all the nuclear powers around the table if anything meaningful on disarmament is to emerge.

Criticism of USA

Nor does anyone deny that the Soviet-sponsored declaration on non-intervention, a reasonable and potentially constructive document in its own right, was probably tabled in order to provide a forum for broad criticism of US policy in south-east Asia - or that certain Afro-Asians were more than normally militant on this issue because they felt a need to defend absent China

crisis enables a great nation to place human survival ahead of its own national interest and to pull back before it's too late.

Admittedly this would run counter to one of the truisms of international conduct; but since military science has undergone comparable contradictions, is this really asking too much?

True, Ambassador Goldberg, in his full-dress round-up press conference the day after the close of the Assembly, insisted that the use of atomic weapons in Vietnam was "not conceivable." But there are too many variables in a spiralling war to ensure the viability of any passing promise, not even if it originates at the very highest level.

China a 'new member'?

In making that answer, Mr Goldberg was presumably speaking on the basis of specific information. But against what kind of background his answers to questions on China had been made a few minutes earlier remains a mystery - and invites speculation.

The first of the two was badly put. "Sir," asked a correspondent, "what is your reaction at by-passing the Charter and deciding such an important issue as the admission of Red China by a simple majority?" (Nobody by-passed the Charter because the China case is not one of admission but rather representation, and on this there is ample precedent for the simple-majority vote. Furthermore, the Charter allows the Assembly to decide, by a simple majority, whether certain questions require a simple or a two-thirds majority. And finally, the China vote was not decided by a simple majority; the United States had the crucial votes to force application of the two-thirds formula.)

Mr Goldberg's reply absorbed the multiple errors and compounded them: "Well," said he, "the Charter is very clear... that the admission of any

members generally align themselves with her, and by some unexplained formula there are always two Latin American states among the non-permanent members and the United States can normally count on these. Besides, when Asian seats on the Council are occupied by states like Malaysia (now vacating) or Japan (coming in), Afro-Asian militancy is almost inaudible.

Ironically, then the non-aligned who fought for the Security Council's enlargement by Charter amendment - which became a constitutional reality last summer - actually have now no more political power on the "new" Council than they had on the old one, even though they have, numerically, a larger voice. On the other hand, they would have advanced their cause had they, instead, put that energy into seeing that Peking's seat was restored during the Twentieth Assembly session. Western-oriented Taiwan would then have been replaced by an irrefutably Asian delegation, permanently seated, armed with a protective veto, and, as an economically developing nation, having more in common with the Afro-Asians than any other major power.

Moreover, these same (mostly smaller) nations would have benefited from any initiative China might have seen fit to take in the working committees of the General Assembly.

Rather undistinguished

The achievements of those committees during this twentieth session were, as far as one can tell, about average, with very little that would be immediately measurable, save for a newly formed body for probing some of the road-blocks in industrial development.

Besides the non-intervention declaration mentioned earlier there was a most welcome declaration on racial discrimination, which occupied a large share of the Third Committee's time and drew

I wrote recently (December 17) of the Paramount Films' press release which speaks glowingly of the Africanness of *Dingaka* without once mentioning that the film was made in South Africa. Ross Devenish wrote on another page of how the film is designed to reinforce apartheid attitudes but is distributed subtly by ABC as an "international" rather than a South African film.

I have now received the Rank Film Library 16mm Film News for November, which shows no such subtlety. In their details of sponsored films distributed on free loan, there are listed four sponsored by the South African Embassy. One, from the blurb, is about communication systems and sounds fairly innocuous; another is called *My Own, My Native Land* and is about a lawyer who returns to his native Transkei "to be present at the inauguration of the Transkei Parliament and to look at his homeland in order to assess for himself whether the Bantu self-government plan will really work." One needn't guess at the film's answer.

But the last two films are unspeakable. *Anatomy of Apartheid*:

"A brief review of a development programme which takes full cognisance of the basic differences between widely separated national cultures in multi-racial South Africa,"

and *Bastion of the South*:

"Defence being synonymous with the oft-repeated phrase 'to have, to hold, to cherish and to develop,' South Africa is here shown as a bastion of the Western world in Africa. Sabres and Mirages represent the Air Force, and some of the country's latest anti-submarine frigates, the Navy."

To cherish and develop who? Against whom?

16mm Film News advises its readers to write early for sponsored films because they are always heavily booked. That's hardly surprising when the films are distributed free. For these four propaganda films Rank provides the distribution system; and the South African Embassy pays all costs.

Two true stories from Australia, to enliven your new year. First, a man was arrested in Sydney and emerged from the police station with a ruptured liver. A police inquiry (i.e. one run by the police) announced that he got his in-

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Criticism of USA

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When so-called "reasonable" Americans say that they would like to see an end to the war but don't see how the United States, as a great nation, can pull out now, it's generally hard to get them to explain just *why* not, because suddenly the idea of justifying an indefinite continuation of the war merely for the sake of something called "prestige" begins to sound a bit hair-brained.

To maintain that the United States cannot withdraw from a dangerously escalating war without great loss of prestige - France's example to the contrary - is to resort to bow-and-arrow thinking in the midst of a nuclear society. Surely nobody in Asia doubts that the United States has the conventional fire-power to destroy North Vietnam physically or that it has the nuclear power to reduce the world to ashes. If American thinking could catch up with American weaponry, the United States might acquire the capacity to see the *new* "prestige" as a combination of power and conscience which in the course of a sharpening

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Mr Goldberg's reply absorbed the multiple errors and compounded them: "Well," said he, "the Charter is very clear . . . that the admission of any member state is an important issue. The Assembly has so declared. I would think it cannot declare otherwise, consistent with the Charter." And a few minutes later he was asked whether he had really meant to say that the issue of Chinese representation was now "a case of admission of a new member." To this he gave neither a yes or a no, but merely restated his comment.

This may have been nothing more than a careless choice of words on Mr Goldberg's part (and if so it was a sizeable slip). But some observers feel that it may, on the other hand, have been the opening gun in an effort to shift positions before next September and demand that Peking be obliged to come in as a "new member," which would then require Security Council recommendation and be subject to the veto.

How the United States - if this is her intent - would manage to make this extraordinary interpretation stick, legally, is not at all clear, since there are signs that by next year she would not be able to muster a simple majority on this issue. But if she should go to the extreme of asking that the status of the People's Republic of China be determined by the International Court of Justice (assuming that this move in itself could be engineered), then the whole matter might be frozen for a considerable period.

The only certainty in all this is that if by some strange configuration of forces China were asked to come in as a new member, she would never bother to apply. The United States could rally enough abstentions in the Security Council to keep her out indefinitely (or, in the crunch, use the veto).

The expanded Council

Even the newly expanded 15-member Council represents no obstacle to the United States, at least in its present make-up. Four of the five permanent

nations would have benefited from any initiative China might have seen fit to take in the working committees of the General Assembly.

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Besides the non-intervention declaration mentioned earlier there was a most welcome declaration on racial discrimination, which occupied a large share of the Third Committee's time and drew much more than the expected quota of highly-charged exchanges.

But curiously enough, it was procedure rather than substance (or, perhaps more accurately, substance in disguise) that characterised the last days of the session. The United States sought to moderate certain resolutions by asking that portions of them be subject to the two-thirds (vote) rule; and because this point was raised over issues which, according to the Afro-Asians, had in the past been decided by a simple majority, a very real battle arose over which side was indeed guilty of constitutional irregularity.

The United States for her part seemed to be saying that she would feel no compunction to abide by any of the resolutions adopted by a simple majority if in her view a two-thirds was called for. The Afro-Asians, on the other hand, felt that this new infatuation with the two-thirds formula might be the beginning of a long challenge to positions they had assumed were by now generally accepted.

But they had their small victories, too. In one of the most incredible exchanges of the year, Congressman O'Hara (US), speaking with evident emotion in the Fourth (Trusteeship) Committee, characterised the island of Guam as "every inch . . . as American as my own state of Michigan," and then remarked that the United States was "training" both Guam and the Virgin Islands "to become states of the Union," thus furnishing the Afro-Asians (and others) with information that they had many times tried for but failed to get.

All in all - save for the Pope's visit and Prime Minister Wilson's customary eloquence - the twentieth was a rather undistinguished session. And the twenty-first will be even more so unless the world has meantime regained enough of its sanity to give living precedence over killing and tolerance precedence over hate.

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16mm Film News advises its readers to write early for sponsored films because they are always heavily booked. That's hardly surprising when the films are distributed free. For these four propaganda films Rank provides the distribution system; and the South African Embassy pays all costs.

Two true stories from Australia, to enliven your new year. First, a man was arrested in Sydney and emerged from the police station with a ruptured liver. A police inquiry (i.e. one run by the police) announced that he got his injuries when a 20-stone constable accidentally fell on him. Second, another young man was arrested, also in Sydney, and charged with insulting the police, obscene language and car stealing. The last charge was backed up with a signed statement dictated by him to a policeman. When this man entered the dock, the prosecution could get no word from him. He turned to the jury and waved his arms about; after a minute or so it became obvious that he was a deaf mute. The police are sticking to their story, despite subsequent evidence from doctors. Perhaps he was struck dumb after watching the 20-stone coppers practising their falls.

In Watford, supporters of CND were busy in December collecting Christmas fare for old age pensioners. They had great success with this activity last year too, and apart from the comfort it brings people who need it, they say it generates a great atmosphere of goodwill in the town towards CND.

In Scotland, Edinburgh Council for Nuclear Disarmament, helped by YCND, made a collection throughout the city on Christmas Eve, which raised a total of £484 for War on Want.

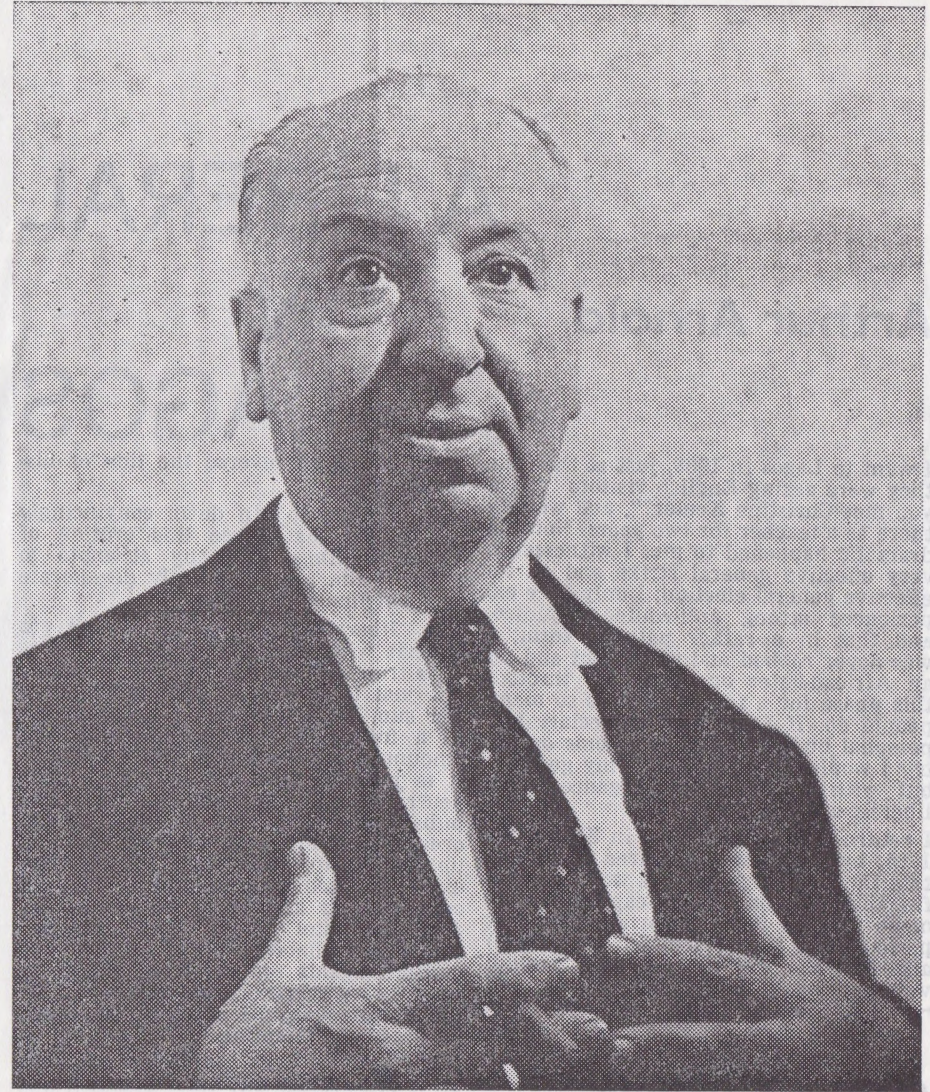
In Cardiff, a 24-hour fast on Christmas Eve was organised by anarchists. It raised £184 to be distributed to war victims in both North and South Vietnam through Oxfam; if the money cannot be earmarked in this way, it will go into Oxfam's general funds.

These are the only three reports of this kind of work over Christmas that I've received. In themselves, they are very warming; I hope there are more which I don't know about yet.

Peace News every Friday for 9d by placing a regular order with your newsagent

Order two, one to show
Just to help shop sales grow

Alfred Hitchcock



Michael Philips

HITCHCOCK WORSHIP

Hitchcock's Films, by Robin Wood (A Zwemmer 10s 6d).

Anyone with more than a passing interest in the cinema must by now be aware of the high honour accorded the films of Alfred Hitchcock by certain groups of younger critics, notably those across the Channel. Until now, English readers interested in the kind of position held by *Cahiers du Cinema* have had little choice but view the situation through the distorting-glass offered by *Sight and Sound* or in the hazy reflections of *Movie*.

Robin Wood's book more than fills the gap. He argues his case rigorously and with sensitivity, so that after reading his 170-odd smallish pages of criticism we know what he likes, what he dislikes, how Hitchcock's movies work for him, and why. Only two legitimate modes of reaction seem open to us: either we agree, or else must rethink our position carefully and answer Mr Wood in the sort of detail his work demands. One is hard-put to think of one other similar study of a film director published in Britain during the last ten years (i.e. ever) of which *this* could be said truthfully.

A full analysis of the book is out as far as this review is concerned, but let us look at some of the more obvious dangers in Robin Wood's approach which might help to account for the eccentricities of judgment which seem to cluster particularly in the second half of his book.

ing is not confined to general outlook and vocabulary ("complex," "organic," "inward" etc) but extends to emotional stance. Perhaps the most noticeable instance is a complete lack of humour - a serious matter for a critic of Hitchcock if not of Lawrence. I think there can be little doubt that it leads to a significant misreading of the "mood" of various films. For example, we should never guess from Mr Wood's account how very funny *North by Northwest* often is. And can it be coincidence that *To Catch a Thief* and *The Trouble With Harry* are the only recent Hitchcock films not to rate a mention?

We often feel we are learning more from these pages about Robin Wood than about Alfred Hitchcock. This, for example, compares the Kim Novak character in *Vertigo* with Midge, played by Barbara Bel Geddes:

"Madeleine is so much more erotic because of this combination of grace, mysteriousness and vulnerability."

The compelling logic seems a trifle vague; the attributes of eroticism seem more like a matter of choice. Also it does show how Mr Wood tends to assert rather than demonstrate. Actually the *Vertigo* review is by far the best in the book, but here as elsewhere the author seems to *over-react* to the film, either generously providing himself what is not there or giving a weight which the rest of the film will not support to the

I believe, by psychologists as arising from the tension between the desire to fall and the dread of falling."

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back projection (or "travelling-matte") for example, which is a technical device which Hitchcock has used abominably in nearly every Hollywood film he has made. Mr Wood first spots it in *The Birds* and it doesn't take long for him to decide, with characteristic certainty, that "whether intentional or not, it certainly has the effect of giving an air of unreality to (Melanie's) situation." To me it gives an air of unreality to the movie. How would Mr Wood account for the equally dreadful interior studio sets of exteriors which we also find in *The Birds*?

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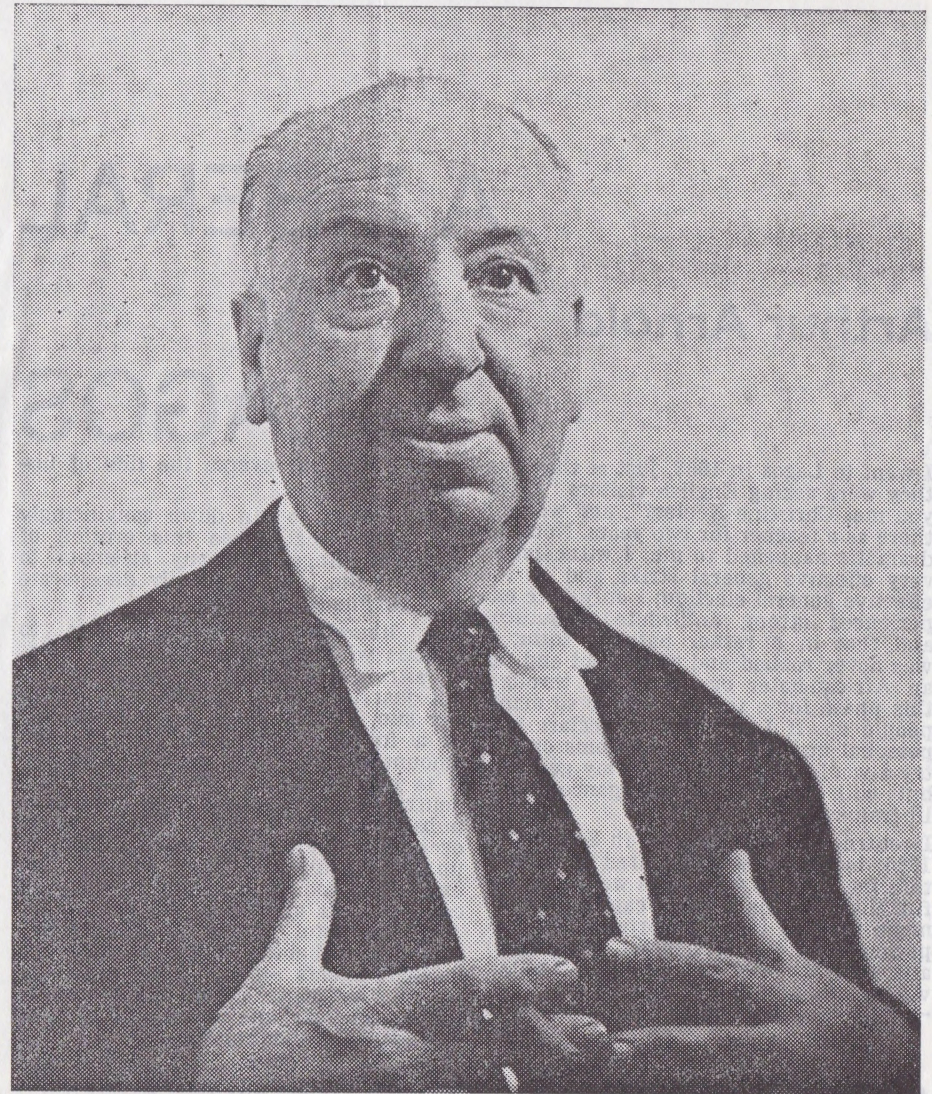
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Having introduced us to Alfred Hitchcock the Great Artist, Robin Wood appears slightly uneasy about public statements made by the man himself. Why is it that Hitchcock appears so oblivious to his own greatness; why does he deny any "deeper logic" in his work than a desire to "put the audience through it"? Nothing for it but to drag out the creaky old line about the supreme artist who works his effects unconsciously. Nor unless we restrict ourselves to Hitchcock's evasive tactics at film festival press conferences, does Mr Wood's picture of the public face ring very true. On the contrary, reading through Hitchcock interviews one gets the impression that the master is quite willing to discuss quite frankly many aspects of his work which really interest him. Only they aren't the same things that interest Robin Wood.

And yet much of the case outlined in the book's introductory section is balanced, and needed saying. Hitchcock clearly is very much more than a "mere" entertainer. For a start he is preoccupied consistently with themes which obviously disturb him deeply, and he often manages to convey his feeling. The threat of chaos and its intrusion into everyday life provides the essence of nearly every one of his movies. What is in question, however, is the extent to which Hitchcock successfully resolves the themes he raises, and here I think his achievement is less certain. If we don't respond to the films in the same way as Robin Wood (and his inability to communicate the "feel" of a film is very marked - often the discussion is almost at script level) it is difficult, naturally, to accept his far-reaching claims.

But this intelligent paperback - attractively produced and well worth half-a-guinea - is one that *will* make us take sides. So much the better: I look forward to hearing from *Sight and Sound*. The review (if there is one) should be a useful indication of the health of our critical establishment.

Anthony Adams

The emperor dies

Notes and Counter Notes by Eugene Ionesco (Calder and Boyars, 1965, 35s).

Plays, Volume 6: A Stroll in the Air and Frenzy for Two by Eugene Ionesco (Calder and Boyars, 1965, 18s).

It was a long time ago that the Editor of *Peace News* sent me these two books for review and I am grateful for an indulgence that has waited so long for the copy to arrive at *Peace News* office. The delay was not a wilful one: it is that I am puzzled by Ionesco and have spent a great deal of time reading and re-reading these volumes and thinking about their author.

The problem is that Ionesco looks at first sight to be a major figure in the field of modern European drama. He certainly has the pretensions of being one. *Notes and Counter Notes* is full of scorn for "critics," constantly affirming that "a work of art has nothing to do with doctrine"; and yet, at the same time, by implication, Ionesco makes the most astounding claims for himself and for his work. Typical of this kind of pretentiousness is, for example, his dislike of Brecht which receives continual expression throughout the volume. The most interesting thing by far that it contains is a reprint of the controversy with Kenneth Tynan which originally appeared in the pages of the *Observer* in which Tynan proclaimed the values of "committed" theatre as against that of Ionesco. To this Ionesco replies with great verbal skill:

"An ideological play can be no more than a vulgarisation of an ideology. In my view, a work of art has its own unique system of expression, its own means of directly apprehending the real."

"A work of art is the expression of an incommunicable reality that one tries to communicate - and which sometimes can be communicated. That is its paradox, and its truth."

But, and this seems to me the essential point, one is left at the end wondering whether there is anything more here than paradox - and reluctantly I come to the conclusion that there is not. Ionesco is the manifestation in our own time of a new aestheticism; like all aesthetes he is capable of being interesting but never engaging because of his ultimate refusal to engage himself. He is the supreme example in the world of modern theatre of "the emperor's clothes" - he convinces while we read or watch him for the first time, he persuades us that there is something there for us to apprehend. But ultimately the emperor is naked; we may well wonder, as Tynan did, on seeing *The Chairs* for the second time, whether there is anything there at all. So convincing is Ionesco's credibility of style that I have delayed writing this review because I suspected that I had missed something. Now I am convinced that I have not. This perhaps is why the short plays succeed in a way in which the longer dramas

do not. The central image of *The Chairs* or of *The Lesson* is perhaps capable of being sustained for the period of time that those plays last - but no longer. When the pursuit of verbal ingenuity and the presentation of paradox with the self-confidence of the professional lecturer is presented at such repetitious length as it is in *Notes and Counter Notes* it becomes unbearably tedious.

Having reached this conclusion as a result of a study of Ionesco's critical prose I was hardly surprised to find it confirmed by the plays also sent me for review. Of the two of them only *A Stroll in the Air* could possibly merit serious consideration for a moment. And then a moment is sufficient. In this play we see the clearly Ionesco-like Bérenger in retirement from the theatre. "I am paralyzed since I know I must die." But Bérenger demonstrates his ability to fly - the act of the creative artist? - and at his landing he reveals a world of devastation and destruction, a kind of latter day Waste Land.

"And then, and then, infinite wastes of ice instead of unending fire, then the fire and the ice again. Deserts of ice, deserts of fire battling with each other and all coming slowly towards us . . . nearer and nearer and nearer . . . No-one would believe me. I was sure no-one would believe me . . . mud

continued overleaf

A LIBERAL IN LAGOS

Arthur Arnold

I went to Lagos in 1963, just at the time they were asking English visitors "Have you met Christine Keeler?", and worked there as a teacher for two years. Nothing dramatic happened to me; I witnessed a very effective general strike and an ineffective general election; I only once experienced strong anti-white prejudice, and that in a rather pathetic form; I was never robbed and so did not end up an African-hater or even pass through this phase for a few months as so many people do. If I had had to declare any personal qualities at the customs on entry I would have said, not "my genius," but with no less an arrogance, "my liberalness."

I returned to this country in September 1965; by then I was prepared to believe that the English policemen were wonderful, that the abolition of capital punishment was of little importance (except perhaps to a few condemned murderers) and that the white Rhodesians, though wrong, deserved much more sympathy in

their efforts to reverse the tide of history.

It is difficult to pin down convincingly the agents that cause this erosion of liberal feelings, and any attempts to describe the process usually degenerate into a string of anecdotes.

The liberal-minded person goes to Nigeria with motives of varying degrees of altruism. Certainly most of us go, not just to live in a little England in the sun, but because we want to live in a foreign country and have a fair amount of social contact with its people. It is just this that proves difficult. The neutral meeting grounds are not there; pubs do not exist, nor do those sort of occasions where everybody would end up talking in a pub. Hotel bars are too expensive, too plushy, too redolent of colonial days and much too quiet. The African "hotel" is too noisy, too hot, too much inhabited by prostitutes and political agents for any white person to sit in easy conversation. He would be too conspicuous, the object of too much curiosity and attention.

Nigerians are very hospitable and welcome you readily into their houses but it is hard to relax there. The house is probably overcrowded with people of uncertain status - it is hard to tell if they are poor relatives or servants. Children are still running about at ten or eleven at night. You may sip your Star Beer, which you will certainly be offered, but conversations will go on round you in Yoruba (naturally) and the kind of talk you are accustomed to over a glass of beer will not come very easily.

The informal meal at home can often turn into an embarrassment. Although most Nigerians will eat an English meal with some show of enjoyment few Europeans can happily eat an everyday Nigerian meal. The appearance puts

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This is the "erosion of liberal feeling" which Arthur Arnold experienced after two years' teaching in Nigeria; below, he writes about the difficulties of being a liberal-minded Englishman in Nigeria.

off your compassion. The armless man who makes such obvious play of his amputated stump, the man whose fingers and toes have been burnt away by leprosy, the polio victim crawling about on wood blocks, all become rather unpleasant nuisances. Sympathy for human misery is diminished and respect for human life is diminished with it.

So suicidal are the habits of most Lagos pedestrians and so little concern is shown for them by most drivers that it is only a matter of time before they seem to become expendable pawns in the game of beat the traffic jam. After all, they behave as though a car is harmless until the horn is sounded, so clearly once warning has been given the driver's duty is done.

Respect for life diminishes; concern for property increases. To the reasonably wealthy person whose possessions are insured, a burglary may be a great inconvenience but it is hardly a disaster of such magnitude as to provoke the reactions it frequently does. I had not been in Lagos very long when I heard the story of a missionary who lived a few miles out in the bush. He was woken by his steward one night with the news that a thief was in the house. They gave chase (a bold thing to do) and eventually caught up with him. The steward hung the thief on the ground and proceeded to kick him and beat him up. After a while the missionary decided to stop this so he pulled the steward away and continued to beat up the thief himself. The Peace Corps official who bought a gun and was prepared to shoot on sight any burglar he found in the house was not in any way exceptional; neither are the many people who nightly connect up the anti-thief wire mesh (which does not protect their houses very well) to the mains electricity supply.

The thief-wire itself constitutes an ugly reminder that there are those outside who must at all costs be kept at bay. It covers every window in every house, sometimes in the form of iron bars. In

order to look out you must look through it. "Watch nights" sit about on every compound, heavily armed. They don't prevent burglaries - they just get sacked every time there is one. Their complicity is always assumed, probably rightly, and they make convenient scapegoats anyway.

Language creates the final barrier. In communicating with servants, finer nuances of reason and motive are lost. When the gardener asks for a loan of four pounds, you may, if you wish, explain that you lent him two pounds last month and one pound the month before that, that you pay him better than average wages and that your loans don't seem to be helping him to solve his problems and you think he had better find some way of re-organising his finances. Hypocritical as this should sound to someone earning a tenth of your own salary, if it is said in a polite tone of voice it will be taken to mean that you are on the point of acceding to his demand, and the demand will continue to be put. You will then have to say, in a much less polite tone of voice, a few rather harsh and irrelevant things to bring the business to an end. You may sound to yourself like the voice of imperialism but to the gardener you will sound like the voice of tribal authority he is used to and he will know where he is once again.

Sooner or later, one is brought up against the colour prejudice which I contend exists in everybody at some level. Don't sparrows mob a canary? I came across it in myself when I took over an unfamiliar class during a staffing emergency. About half way through the lesson I noticed that in the hope of getting correct answers to key questions so that I could push on quickly with the lesson I was putting all these questions to the paler complexioned boys.

It is nice to be able to record that the fact was forced on me when one near-white boy had given me a wildly incorrect answer for the fourth time.

Anthony Adams

The emperor dies

continued from page 5

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A Stroll in the Air is in fact a dramatisation - if we can call it that, for like all the later Ionesco it seems to me unbearably static - of the attitudes of *Notes and Counter Notes*. But essentially Bérenger, and his creator, are prophets without a message, rather than a latter-day Cassandra crying "Woe! Woe!" to deaf ears.

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But the prophet is not entirely without honour. Even Tynan acknowledges certain elements of Ionesco's quality: "No one could help admiring the sincerity and skill with which, last Sunday, M. Ionesco marshalled prose for his purposes," but, he concludes, we could not help feeling "ultimately, regret: regret that a man so capable of stating a positive attitude towards art should deny that there was any positive attitude worth taking towards life. Or even (which is crucial) that there was an umbilical connection between the two." Moreover the whole concept of *The Theatre of the Absurd* has been erected into a modern myth by Martin Esslin.

Ultimately I regard this as exceedingly dangerous. The retreat from reason - from what can be communicated and from responsibility to anything outside the theatre - which Ionesco represents runs counter to the whole modern movement in theatre, and to seek to give it an intellectual respectability is to do a disservice not only to theatre but to life itself - it is, in fact, high time that someone pointed out firmly, if compassionately, that the emperor is without clothes.

And yet one is not wholly convinced. For such is the power of Ionesco's prose that it exercises an almost hypnotic power over the reader - here perhaps lies the source of his dangerousness. I am to go soon to see a production of *Rhinoceros* by a producer of whose work I think most highly. If he can convince me that there is anything here other than pretentious verbiage I shall certainly write to the Editor and retract the harshness of this review. I think that *Notes and Counter Notes* is worth reading because of its clear statement of two totally opposed views of theatre - only one of which I imagine could possibly commend itself to readers of this journal; but the plays in Volume 6 of Ionesco's *Theatre* seem to me to be incredible in their fatuity.

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The informal meal at home can often turn into an embarrassment. Although most Nigerians will eat an English meal with some show of enjoyment few Europeans can happily eat an everyday Nigerian meal. The appearance puts them off, and the pepper. I have been to (and given) well-meant parties where Nigerian food is served without pepper but the effect is depressing - like eating potatoes without salt.

Relationships with Nigerians married to European women are, of course, much easier to establish, as are those with "been-to's" (people who have studied in Europe or the States); but friendships with wholly indigenous families often need hard work and tact on both sides before they can succeed, although they are extremely rewarding. Perhaps the car is the best meeting ground. I got to know my best Nigerian friend by helping him to learn to drive and we often sat in the car, roasting, sweating, but talking, long after the "lesson" had ended.

But these are person to person relations. What of one's attitude to people *en masse*? One becomes guarded and, eventually, callous. Beggars are everywhere. Imagine you are leaving a department store loaded with Christmas shopping and you see a crablike figure, arms like sticks, hands clutching two blocks of wood, two more blocks strapped to its knees, its legs below the knees like black bones waving uselessly in the air as it crawls miraculously between the cars across the road. What can you give it that will be significant? And when you find your arms so full of shopping that you cannot reach your trouser pocket how do you begin to quieten your disturbed mind? Imagine you see this every time you go shopping. How do you continue to answer your conscience?

You observe those beggars who have a favoured pitch outside the European-type shops and, after making a few calculations, you come to the conclusion that they are probably better off than the average manual worker. You make up your mind to stop giving to them and, except when they catch you off your guard (they are experts in human psychology), you very largely stick to your resolve. But at the same time you cut

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Further postponement of Italian priest's trial

Franco Perna writes: The Rev Lorenzo Milani is already known to the readers of *Peace News*. It suffices, therefore, to say that early this year Don Milani wrote an open letter in answer to military chaplains, who in a press release had called conscientious objectors cowards; he explained that even the Church did not condemn conscientious objection, and maintained that a citizen has not only the right but the duty as a Christian to refuse to obey orders when these are against his own conscience. The letter also dealt with the concept of just and unjust wars, giving evidence that wars fought as just were later considered aggressive.

The priest was immediately accused of incitement to commit crime, and with him the editor of *Rinascita*, a Communist weekly paper which published the priest's letter. The trial started in Rome on October 30, 1965, but had to be postponed because of the priest's illness. There was good press and TV coverage about the accused men, mostly in their support; publicity was given to a 16-page memorial prepared by Don Milani in his own defence.

On December 14, the trial opened again in a small but very crowded room of the Tribunale di Roma. There were many priests, journalists, Catholic and Communist personalities, also from abroad. Don Milani was again absent because of illness. His lawyer, however, asked the court to consider the latest statements issued by the Vatican Council on this issue, to remember that the Italian Parliament is about to consider three bills for the legal status of COs, to call as a witness the Minister of Defence, who himself drafted a bill for COs, and to take into account the fact that Don Milani has much public opinion in his support.

The court, after 80 minutes in closed council, said through the public prosecutor:

sparrows mob a canary? I came across it in myself when I took over an unfamiliar class during a staffing emergency. About half way through the lesson I noticed that in the hope of getting correct answers to key questions so that I could push on quickly with the lesson I was putting all these questions to the paler complexioned boys.

It is nice to be able to record that the fact was forced on me when one near-white boy had given me a wildly incorrect answer for the fourth time.

"We are not interested whether there are proposals (for COs in Parliament), or whether some citizens promote movements in defence of conscientious objectors. The court must only decide whether a citizen, in practising freedom of expression, does or does not go beyond the limits fixed by the law."

These words meant in effect, as some papers have commented, that the court is not concerned with what Parliament thinks, or the competent minister of the government, or what the Church says in its Schema 13, approved by the Vatican Council. The court is similarly not interested in what well known university professors, intellectuals, artists, simple citizens, religious ministers of all confessions might think. In other words the court is not interested in the society in which Don Milani lives, nor his school or his efforts to improve the standard of education.

What interests the court is the respect of an article of the law, no matter whether it is an abstract concept without human or civil meaning.

The court has again postponed the trial, until February 15. Meanwhile another press campaign has already started and public opinion is becoming rather impatient.

Meanwhile, an all-party constitutional commission, convened to consider the three proposals now before Parliament, has declared that although compulsory military service is sanctioned by the constitution, this does not prevent a law being adopted to give a citizen the right to opt for "a service compatible with his own conscience." The proposals are therefore not in conflict with the constitution.

There was one dissentient from the declaration - a fascist. The decision now goes to a judicial commission for consideration.

US soldier-objector gets three years

A United States army private who contended he was a conscientious objector was jailed for three years at a court martial on December 22.

Private James Taylor was a student minister at Oklahoma Christian College until early 1965, when he dropped some of his courses. He was draft-exempt as a student, and he had also filed a conscientious objection claim. When he dropped to below the required number of courses for a student exemption, he was reclassified 1-A without ruling on his claim; but when he was told that he would be guaranteed non-combatant status, he chose to enlist rather than be conscripted.

He then found that he had to undergo basic combat training; refused; had a term in the stockade; applied for discharge as a CO; was refused; and disobeyed orders to dismantle and reassemble a rifle for inspection. This act led to his court martial.

The members of the court did not take into consideration any evidence of Taylor's religious beliefs or studies, or his

claims to conscientious objection; they were ruled as having no bearing on the matter of whether he disobeyed direct orders. At one point the army inspector cited a regulation stating that a soldier must obey any order, whether or not it might be a "violation of the individual's religious or moral scruples." Mr Taylor's civilian lawyer, Francis Heisler, said that they would appeal "all the way to the Supreme Court if necessary." - *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 23.

US ex-servicemen protest at GI arrests

An American ex-servicemen's organisation has protested strongly at the arrest of two US soldiers recently released from captivity in Vietnam.

The two men, George Smith and Claude McClure, were released by the National Liberation Front on November 27. After their release they stated that they were opposed to US involvement in the Vietnam war. On December 27 it was announced that they were being held in Okinawa for preliminary investigation of the charge that they aided the enemy while in captivity.

The "Veterans and Reservists to End the War in Vietnam" have urged that Smith and McClure be returned to the United States for any further investigations; that "competent civilian counsel" defend them rather than counsel provided by the army; that a full disclosure of the charges and "all pertinent facts about the conduct of the two soldiers while in captivity" be made immediately; that American and foreign journalists be allowed to meet the two men. The veterans' statement says that "dissent in the form of unpopular viewpoints is at the heart of the democratic process," and that the free speech rights of Smith and McClure are being infringed by the handling of the case.

BEFORE THE PAUSE



Smoke rises from the wreckage of a power plant in Uong Bi, North Vietnam. The plant, 14 miles from Haiphong, was bombed by American jets on December 23; it was said to be the first attack on an industrial target. Three US planes were shot down in the attack on the plant, which provides 15% of North Vietnam's electricity, and 25% of Hanoi's supply.

Pacifist sailor jailed

A technician in the US Navy who was alleged to have drawn a nuclear disarmament symbol on his jacket and refused to remove it when ordered has been given 30 days' hard labour by a summary court martial. He was also reduced in rank and ordered to forfeit pay.

The sailor is James Gilbert; he was stationed at San Francisco, and in October he had applied for release from the Navy as a conscientious objector. In a statement to the court martial, he said that he wore the nuclear disarmament symbol in evidence of his moral outrage at the war in Vietnam, and that he recognised no law that could deprive him of the right to express his beliefs. The military denied him his basic constitu-

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A group of 35 friends and supporters who came to attend the court martial were refused permission to attend. Seventeen of them were arrested when police and marines surrounded a number of them who remained outside the camp gates. They were released after being held for several hours in San Francisco City Jail.

Protesters arrested at helicopter plant

Demonstrators at a Pennsylvania helicopter plant on December 29 carried placards reading "Helicopters kill children." The demonstration was called by the Committee for Non-violent Action (National and Philadelphia) as a "confrontation of the military power and counter-insurgency policies implemented by the helicopters produced at Vertol." Vertol is the helicopter division of the Boeing Corporation; its plant is just outside Philadelphia.

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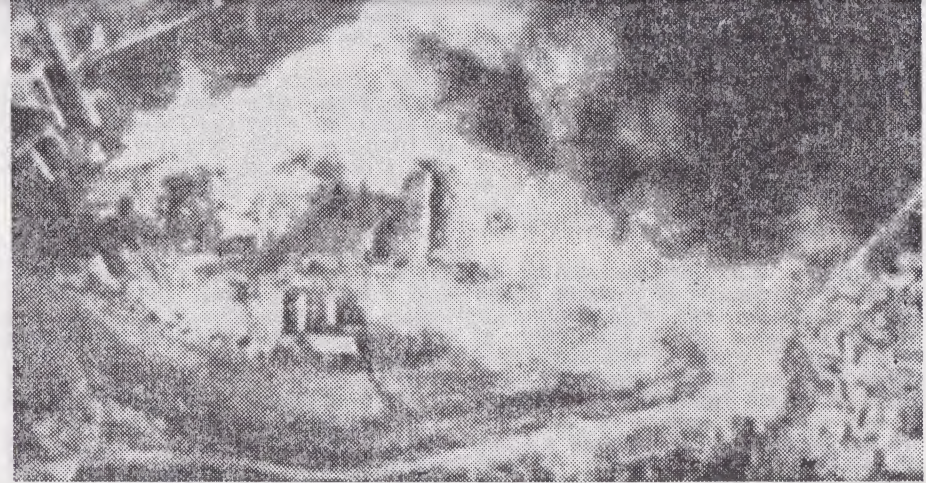
37 refuse taxes for war preparations

Thirty-seven Americans have declared their intention not to pay taxes on their 1965 income, and are calling on others to do the same, as a means of withdrawing their support from war, and in particular the war in Vietnam.

Those launching this appeal include Joan Baez, Dave Dellinger, Dorothy Day, Bradford Lyttle, A. J. Muste and Staughton Lynd. Some of the signatories are refusing the whole of their tax, others a part; some have limited their income to the point where no tax will be due.

A leaflet has been issued arguing the case for tax refusal, and quoting past instances of refusal. It is planned to release the names of all those who have signed the appeal on April 15, this year's income tax deadline.

American Friends aid plan for refugees in South Vietnam



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Kobi, who had previously been trained in the Army Medical Corps, wrote a letter to the federal military department explaining his refusal on religious grounds. In the period when he should have been in the Army he worked at a local hospital under similar conditions to those in the medical corps. The prosecutor demanded four months' imprisonment, but said that he did not want to go into the basic arguments, as the position of COs was already well-known. The defending officer appointed by the court said that he found it unfortunate that COs had to go to prison for their beliefs. Kobi had asked him not to oppose a sentence of imprisonment, but the officer asked for a sentence of close arrest, which is less vigorous than imprisonment, and also for suspension of the sentence. Turning to the public gallery, filled with Kobi's fellow-students, he asked: "Who are these idlers who

have nothing to do all day but come here and support the accused"? At the end of the hearing, Kobi dissociated himself from his defence counsel.

Various demonstrations were organised in support of Georges Kobi.

The Geneva section of the WRI recently held a survey of all the young men between the ages of 18 and 20 in the canton of Geneva. Of the 250 replies so far received, 95% were in favour of a civilian alternative service for COs, and 70% opposed to a continuation of conscription. Heartened by these results, the WRI is continuing its efforts to get a CO law on the Swiss statute book - efforts which have now been going on for 60 years.

Peace in neon

A correspondent writes: A Dutch pacifist, Landman, wrote in neon letters about eight feet high on top of the tower of his factory: "Nederland Ontwapent" - "Netherlands Disarm." At night the letters shine with a beautiful blue light.

The provincial authorities prosecuted him. In court at Hilversum, he defended his action, saying that the Pugwash committee had inspired him and he wanted to help it by making its appeals known to all people by day and by night.

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The demonstrators were met by a hostile pro-war crowd; eventually a sitdown took place and several demonstrators were arrested. Scenes from the encounter were shown on British television news.

Vertol produces the helicopters used by the US "air cavalry" in Vietnam. A CNVA leaflet describes the helicopter as "the foremost symbol of the US effort to make distant people behave as we think they should." For several months, CNVA has been conducting a "community education" campaign at the Vertol plant and in the surrounding district, protesting against the plant's involvement in the Vietnam war, and urging a US withdrawal.

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American Friends aid plan for refugees in South Vietnam

David Stickney, an Illinois hospital administrator, has been given 18 months' leave of absence to work as director of a refugee relief programme in South Vietnam. The programme is organised by the American Friends Service Committee; it will be centred in the city of Qui Nhon, where there are an estimated 100,000 refugees.

The programme will involve education, self-help and training. It is the result of a visit to South Vietnam last summer by three AFSC representatives, who reported that there were over 600,000 refugees, and that the number was rapidly increasing. The mission reported:

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His defence counsel, Hein van Wijk, said that regulations which prohibited words of conscientious appeal are contrary to the fundamental human rights of freedom of conscience and opinion. He claimed his client was not guilty. The judge, however, fined Landman £2 10s. He has appealed to the Amsterdam court.

UN vigil

Peter Gregonis, of the New England Committee for Non-violent Action, Voluntown, Connecticut, is calling on peace organisations throughout the world to support a perpetual vigil at the United Nations, "which will begin mourning for the demise of mankind."

Bill Wingell

Self-help Christmas in Mississippi

Almost two dozen University of Pennsylvania students headed south for their Christmas vacation, but not to loll in the sun in Florida. Rather, they set aside their books to pick up hammers and saws and construct a community centre for strike-embroiled Negro plantation workers in the Mississippi Delta cotton country.

"Yes, it was my idea," commented Daniel Finnerty, 21, a junior in American civilisation from Cookstown, N.J., and co-ordinator of "Project Mississippi." "I thought, why not use the vacation for something worthwhile instead of hopping off for a suntan or sitting home talking to buddies?"

"Penn," according to this veteran of the Selma march and other civil rights projects, "has traditionally been an 'uninvolved' campus . . . There has been virtually no civil rights activity on the campus. Nothing like Berkeley or Michigan."

So, with a view towards putting together "the nucleus of a much bigger group of people that could become involved in some of the problems of Philadelphia" while at the same time doing that worthwhile something, Finnerty set about organising his project. It was almost by chance, he said, that the campaign came to focus on a group of striking Negro plantation workers near Tribbett, Miss: "I had some contacts in the Delta area, and we were looking for something to do there. The next thing we knew we got a notice from the National Council of Churches saying they wanted a building constructed at Tribbett at a cost of \$10,000. We called them and offered to build it over the Christmas vacation."

In a couple of months, Finnerty and his colleagues had collected more than \$9,000 of the needed \$10,000 in funds. Over \$5,000 came in contributions from the National Council of Churches, Penn's Women's Student Government and the Fund for America's Conscience, the last being a civil rights-oriented

benevolent association administered by columnist Drew Pearson. The remainder was gathered from appeals to individual church, civic and social groups and from the university community itself.

At the same time, the organisers chose 22 students and several university faculty and administrative staff members to go to Mississippi to do the work.

The situation into which the young people have injected themselves is a complex one involving the entire range of socio-economic problems that confronts many southern communities today.

In this instance, 12 Negro families from a Mississippi Delta cotton plantation are on strike for what the National Council of Churches' Delta Ministry calls "not only a decent wage but to be treated in a way that allows them to have dignity as human beings."

The Delta Ministry, which will be working closely with the Penn students at Tribbett, is a National Council commission established a year ago to help alleviate the poor economic, social and political conditions of the Mississippi Negro.

With a staff of 14 and an annual budget of about \$250,000, the Ministry is tackling the interconnected problems of sub-standard education (the worst in the nation), poor job incentives, political disenfranchisement and intimidation. The agency is also attempting to deal with the increasing unemployment due to plantation mechanisation (some 6,500 Negro heads of families in the Delta are expected to lose their jobs to machines next spring) by working to attract industrial investments in the area.

The situation for the Negro plantation workers on the Delta, according to the Rev Bruce Hilton, a project officer at the Ministry's Greenville headquarters, was typified by the conditions under which the Tribbett people lived and worked before their strike last May.

At that time, he said, the tractor drivers, working on the plantation of L. A. An-

drews, were earning \$6 (£2 2s) a day for work that ran from sunup to sunset and was limited by the season. The annual average income for a family was \$600 (£210), as compared to an average of \$4,400 (£1,540) for white families on the Delta.

The drivers and their families lived in "draughty, leaky and cold shacks" provided by the plantation owner. They were not allowed to have visitors whom the owner might think were objectionable - such as civil rights organisers.

When the Andrews plantation workers voted to strike, they knew they had little chance of actually gaining a wage increase or even going back to work, but they "were calling to the attention of white people here and elsewhere the fact that the cotton economy has been built on the black man's back."

The strike was joined by all but one of the Andrews tractor drivers and their families (the families do some of the hoeing and pick the cotton the machines miss or can't reach). Finding it impossible to hire strike-breaking Negroes in the county, the plantation owner was forced to bring in white drivers.

The strikers were immediately thrown out of their plantation lodgings and found it impossible to get other quarters - most of which are controlled by whites. The Delta Ministry thereupon provided the families with large tents, which were set up on a sympathetic Negro farm-owner's land near the Andrews plantation.

Since that time, according to the Rev Hilton, the strike has become a symbol of new self-determination on the part of the Mississippi Negro. At Strike City, as the tent community is called, 51 persons are now living and attempting to set up a few co-operative industries which, they hope, will make them self-supporting.

The Rev Hilton recognises that these small co-operatives are far from the final solution to the job displacement problem on the Delta, but he does stress

that they represent a large step forward for the human dignity of the Negroes involved. He points out that the community centre being constructed by the students "plays a key role in the whole thing because the other Negro people are driving by and want to see what's happening to these people who've put everything on the line in the fight for human dignity . . . The Negroes who didn't have the courage to do this are watching to see what happens."

"The community centre," he explained, "will be a symbol of permanence." In Philadelphia, Daniel Finnerty said that the construction project will be important for the students, too: "When they see those 'gutsy' things going on in Mississippi, they'll be more ready to deal with the problems up here."

One project participant, Emma Jones, told of meeting last week a Mississippi civil rights leader who "mentioned how people in Mississippi need a Christmas, how alien it is to them." She commented: "I figure I've had 20 Christmases; I owe somebody else one."

Wife speaks of Norman Morrison's motives

Norman Morrison, the Baltimore Quaker who burned himself to death outside the Pentagon because of the war in Vietnam, did so after reading an account of the war by a French priest. The article, which originally appeared in *Paris Match*, was reprinted in *I. F. Stone's Weekly* on November 1; Norman Morrison took his life on November 2. A report in Baltimore's *Evening Sun* (November 25) quotes Mrs Morrison as saying that after he read the article, he seemed thoughtful, but not depressed; and then, "somewhere in the conversation, he said he had never felt better or more right . . . I'm sure he wanted

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Mr Morrison took their year-old daughter, Emily, to the Pentagon, but released her unhurt. Mrs Morrison said:

"I think her presence symbolised the innocent children being victimised by this war and all wars. The most important thing to recognise is that he released her unhurt. It was his power to commit her to the same end he chose for himself."

She added that her husband " . . . was dismayed by the view of so many people that their chief obligation is to their own family. He felt that we're all one human family."

"I'm sure he recognised the human and psychological loss his death would be to us, and that must have made the decision very difficult for him. But he must have weighed this against the suffering of the people of Vietnam. The loss of the Vietnamese is really so much greater than my loss . . . I think he did it for our ultimate safety."

Peasants protest in South Vietnam

"Saigon, December 10: A popular demonstration, recalling those of last September in Quang Nam, took place on December 8 in the province of Binh Dinh, 460 kilometres north-east of Saigon. According to reports reaching Saigon, several hundred peasants of An Nh-

John Papworth

WE DO NOT KNOW

Brave New Victuals, by Elspeth Huxley (Chatto and Windus, 21s).

The terms of the argument about the morality of factory farming will already be familiar to *Peace News* readers, and that argument is clearly destined to continue. Here is a book by Elspeth Huxley which restates the terms in vigorous alive-and-kicking English prose which will do much to push it on its way.

With uncommon skill she has absorbed and compressed the gist of a mass of urgently important material into a surprisingly small compass. She seems to be seeking to steer an impartial course between the compulsions of the scientific approach and the imperatives of the need for mystic awareness of our situation. It won't do of course, but I am glad to say that towards the end she abandons the attempt and the mystic in her takes over. But this is not before the scientist has been given a very good innings.

We ought, she says, to know all our population facts now by heart. If we do we don't behave as if we do, we don't behave as if we really understood that in thirty years, by 1995, human numbers will have doubled. Or that another 660 million more will be added by the year 2025.

all these practices will not defeat their own objectives of higher quantitative yields. We do not know whether we are assaulting the reserve powers of disease resistance in plant and animal life to an extent that will confront us with disasters of epidemics and crop failures in years to come. Certainly the evidence Miss Huxley adduces is not very cheering, and only a fool would ignore it. Yet it is being ignored on a scale which on any objective test must be regarded as near insanity.

By far the most interesting chapter of this compulsively readable book is one devoted to stress problems in animals. One of the revelations that emerge from studies in animal behaviour is that at no time can it be described as casual. Sheep, for example, do not graze a hillside haphazardly; areas are as it were staked out, there is, so to speak, a carefully observed "pecking order" and so forth. Just so long as there is no overcrowding and no undue pressure on the available food supply an ordered balance prevails. This holds true, I have learnt from other sources, even among the carnivores, and once a lion has made its kill and satisfied its hunger, smaller animals will graze in its vicinity with no apparent alarm. This harmony is dis-

Russell in a talk on zoo monkeys, who says:

"This brutal method (of establishing rank) does not even work. The wrong monkeys come to the top. Unlike wild leaders, they are insecure and trigger-happy. Unable to assert themselves by a posture of self-assurance, they try to maintain their spurious authority by threats and violence. Government by consent degenerates into an unstable system of 'absolute despotism tempered by assassination.' Showing a tyrant's brief authority . . . he spends much of his time bullying his subjects."

Under this pressure of attack and threat, observes Miss Huxley, even friendship and coat grooming disappear, and yet, like our affluent urban communities, food is provided in abundance, everyone is warm, dry, and well fed.

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of sinking Negro plantation workers near Tribbett, Miss: "I had some contacts in the Delta area, and we were looking for something to do there. The next thing we knew we got a notice from the National Council of Churches saying they wanted a building constructed at Tribbett at a cost of \$10,000. We called them and offered to build it over the Christmas vacation."

In a couple of months, Finnerty and his colleagues had collected more than \$9,000 of the needed \$10,000 in funds. Over \$5,000 came in contributions from the National Council of Churches, Penn's Women's Student Government and the Fund for America's Conscience, the last being a civil rights-oriented

nation), poor job incentives, political disenfranchisement and intimidation. The agency is also attempting to deal with the increasing unemployment due to plantation mechanisation (some 6,500 Negro heads of families in the Delta are expected to lose their jobs to machines next spring) by working to attract industrial investments in the area. The situation for the Negro plantation workers on the Delta, according to the Rev Bruce Hilton, a project officer at the Ministry's Greenville headquarters, was typified by the conditions under which the Tribbett people lived and worked before their strike last May. At that time, he said, the tractor drivers, working on the plantation of L. A. An-

whites. The Delta Ministry thereupon provided the families with large tents, which were set up on a sympathetic Negro farm-owner's land near the Andrews plantation.

Since that time, according to the Rev Hilton, the strike has become a symbol of new self-determination on the part of the Mississippi Negro. At Strike City, as the tent community is called, 51 persons are now living and attempting to set up a few co-operative industries which, they hope, will make them self-supporting.

The Rev Hilton recognises that these small co-operatives are far from the final solution to the job displacement problem on the Delta, but he does stress

motives

Norman Morrison, the Baltimore Quaker who burned himself to death outside the Pentagon because of the war in Vietnam, did so after reading an account of the war by a French priest. The article, which originally appeared in *Paris Match*, was reprinted in *I. F. Stone's Weekly* on November 1; Norman Morrison took his life on November 2.

A report in Baltimore's *Evening Sun* (November 25) quotes Mrs Morrison as saying that after he read the article, he seemed thoughtful, but not depressed; and then, "somewhere in the conversation, he said he had never felt better or more right . . . I'm sure he wanted me to know that he was sane in what he was about to do."

Mr Morrison took their year-old daughter, Emily, to the Pentagon, but released her unhurt. Mrs Morrison said:

"I think her presence symbolised the innocent children being victimised by this war and all wars. The most important thing to recognise is that he released her unhurt. It was his power to commit her to the same end he chose for himself.

She added that her husband

"... was dismayed by the view of so many people that their chief obligation is to their own family. He felt that we're all one human family.

"I'm sure he recognised the human and psychological loss his death would be to us, and that must have made the decision very difficult for him. But he must have weighed this against the suffering of the people of Vietnam. The loss of the Vietnamese is really so much greater than my loss . . . I think he did it for our ultimate safety."

John Papworth

WE DO NOT KNOW

Brave New Victuals, by Elspeth Huxley (Chatto and Windus, 21s).

The terms of the argument about the morality of factory farming will already be familiar to *Peace News* readers, and that argument is clearly destined to continue. Here is a book by Elspeth Huxley which restates the terms in vigorous alive-and-kicking English prose which will do much to push it on its way.

With uncommon skill she has absorbed and compressed the gist of a mass of urgently important material into a surprisingly small compass. She seems to be seeking to steer an impartial course between the compulsions of the scientific approach and the imperatives of the need for mystic awareness of our situation. It won't do of course, but I am glad to say that towards the end she abandons the attempt and the mystic in her takes over. But this is not before the scientist has been given a very good innings.

We ought, she says, to know all our population facts now by heart. If we do we don't behave as if we do, we don't behave as if we really understood that in thirty years, by 1995, human numbers will have doubled. Or that another fifteen years later they will have doubled again! It is our monstrously insane fecundity which is making the slow, profit-inspired trend to battery hens, broiler calves, sweat box pigs and the quest for higher yields of crops by the use of herbicides, fungicides, pesticides and other poisons so apparently necessary.

I say "apparently" because over all these things hangs a gigantic question mark. Despite our desperate need to know we just do not know at all whether

all these practices will not defeat their own objectives of higher quantitative yields. We do not know whether we are assaulting the reserve powers of disease resistance in plant and animal life to an extent that will confront us with disasters of epidemics and crop failures in years to come. Certainly the evidence Miss Huxley adduces is not very cheering, and only a fool would ignore it. Yet it is being ignored on a scale which on any objective test must be regarded as near insanity.

By far the most interesting chapter of this compulsively readable book is one devoted to stress problems in animals. One of the revelations that emerge from studies in animal behaviour is that at no time can it be described as casual. Sheep, for example, do not graze a hillside haphazardly; areas are as it were staked out, there is, so to speak, a carefully observed "pecking order" and so forth. Just so long as there is no overcrowding and no undue pressure on the available food supply an ordered balance prevails. This holds true, I have learnt from other sources, even among the carnivores, and once a lion has made its kill and satisfied its hunger, smaller animals will graze in its vicinity with no apparent alarm. This harmony is disrupted and violence ensues when overcrowding occurs, food becomes scarce and so forth. The hierarchal order natural to each type of life also breaks down when the animals are confined in zoos or cages. In a zoo, since there is nothing to do, individuals have no chance to develop their gifts for leadership; there is only one way for leaders to emerge - by fighting and brute force.

She goes on to quote Dr W. M. S.

Russell in a talk on zoo monkeys, who says:

"This brutal method (of establishing rank) does not even work. The wrong monkeys come to the top. Unlike wild leaders, they are insecure and trigger-happy. Unable to assert themselves by a posture of self-assurance, they try to maintain their spurious authority by threats and violence. Government by consent degenerates into an unstable system of 'absolute despotism tempered by assassination.' Showing a tyrant's brief authority . . . he spends much of his time bullying his subjects."

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Peasants protest in South Vietnam

"Saigon, December 10: A popular demonstration, recalling those of last September in Quang Nam, took place on December 8 in the province of Binh Dinh, 460 kilometres north-east of Saigon. According to reports reaching Saigon, several hundred peasants of An-Nhon district organised a demonstration to protest against the bombardment of hamlets in that region. They went to the district capital, where troops on guard made use of their firearms. Some dead and wounded are reported among the demonstrators. A number were arrested."

- *I. F. Stone's Weekly*, December 20, quoted from *Le Monde*, December 11, with the comment, "Not in the US press."